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HUMANIST ON THE STUMP
– Philip J. Scharper

THE

Commonweal

The Catholic Reactionary

by Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn

CROWN, COLOR AND WITCHDOCTORS

by Michael P. Fogarty

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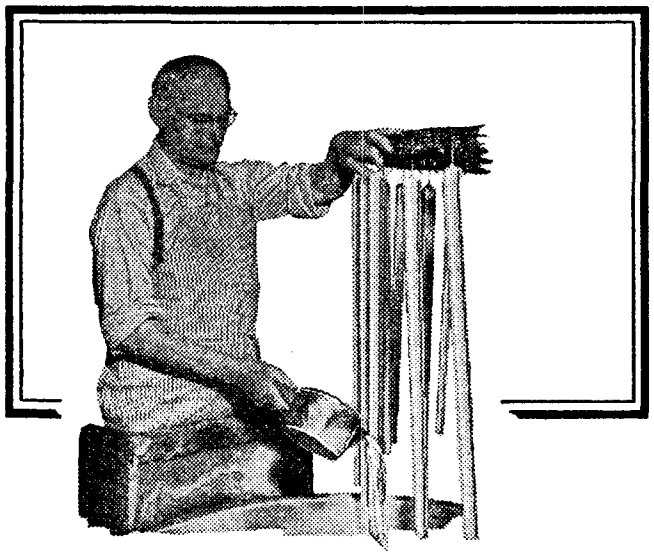

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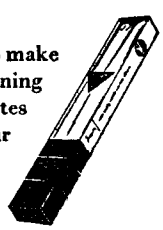

CANDLE CRAFTSMEN FOR NEARLY A HUNDRED YEARS

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EDWARD S. SKILLIN: *Editor*
JOHN COGLEY: *Executive Editor*
JAMES O'GARA: *Managing Editor*

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The Labor Movement: JOHN C. CORT
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The Stage: RICHARD HAYES

Contributing Editors:
PHILIP BURNHAM, ANNE FREMANTLE

JOHN BRUBAKER: *Advertising Manager*

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THE Commonweal

week by week

THE BRANDING OF THE BOOKS

THERE is a growing concern in responsible quarters over the deterioration of America's reputation abroad. According to reports, many of the United States' best friends in Europe feel real anguish at what they see as the steady deterioration of those qualities of tolerance, open-mindedness and humor which have marked this country's greatness.

We have said in the past that European fears for our cultural climate were exaggerated. We still believe they are. But things keep happening in the United States which make it easy to understand our friends' worries.

San Antonio, Texas, is the scene of the latest of these things. This city is presently involved in a controversy over whether to brand as subversive all books in the public library written by persons who had been named in Congressional investigation testimony as Communists or as having been members of allegedly subversive organizations.

Among the books proposed for branding (on a list prepared by the San Antonio Minute Women, an allegedly "patriotic" organization) are Albert Einstein's *Theory of Relativity,* Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain,* and Louis Untermeyer's *Treasury of British and American Poetry*. Included also are editions of *The Canterbury Tales* and *Moby Dick* (both have illustrations by Rockwell Kent).

In a happier time, of course, such a proposal might seem quite funny. But ours is not a very happy time. The branders and the burners, the bigoted and the ignorant, are having their day in too many American communities. They may now have their day in San Antonio.

Fortunately for San Antonio, a group of civilized citizens, headed by former Representative Maury Maverick, has formed an American Activities Committee to fight the book-branders. This committee has announced itself as being for the defense of "freedom of religion, thought, press and publication, assembly, individual liberty, dissemination of information, and for the promotion of the American holidays and the traditional American sense of humor."

This is a fine program. We think the committee members will find it useful too, particularly the part about the American sense of humor, because they will probably be quickly denounced as "subversive" themselves. We wish them well, and hope that word of their program is heard in Europe. Word of the "patriots' " program is sure to be.

MANIZALES AND BEYOND

WITH their thirty millions so predominantly urban—and suburban—American Catholics have had little interest in farm matters. The National Catholic Rural Life Conference, with headquarters in Des Moines, Iowa, has reached but few. It has held forth most convincingly on the more abundant family life that may be achieved close to the soil, and its dynamic Executive Secretary, Monsignor Ligutti, is universally admired. Its periodic national conferences have won recognition as models of liveliness and dispatch. It has maintained the most friendly and constructive contacts with rural leaders of other faiths. But its efforts have generally been held by the body Catholic to be directed at a distinctly minority problem.

During World War II, and the grave dislocations of its aftermath, the NCRLC began materially to extend its scope. It was in the vanguard of those actively engaged in feeding undernourished European war victims; it participated actively in the CROP program, whereby American farmers contributed food, seed, implements and livestock for overseas. In recent months its own GROW program has begun to supply high-yield hybrid seed corn to farmers in France and other lands.

Last January the NCRLC advanced to a much more prominent position on the international stage as a sponsor of the first Latin American Conference on Rural Life Problems, which was held in Manizales, Colombia. For it was bringing its wealth of

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experience to bear on matters vitally affecting three-quarters of the people throughout the other Americas. And it was doing so, at a crucial stage in the cold war, in countries where human need and social unrest are at an apex.

The English text of the Manizales proceedings, which has just been published at the NCRLC Des Moines headquarters, advocates a number of striking things. (And it must be borne in mind that these recommendations were approved by all the delegates, including twenty-four bishops from ten Latin American countries.) For one thing it castigates as a major defect of the Latin American agrarian structure "the prevalence of large landed estates which . . . not infrequently employ the rural worker merely as an instrument of production."

The conference, however, was realistic enough not to present small ownership itself as a panacea. It advocates widespread education in economic and agricultural techniques and in Christian social principles. It calls for wholehearted cooperation with "government and international bodies which promote proper use of the land." Other recommendations stress cooperatives, facilities for farm credit, rural electrification, health measures and everything that has proved its worth in developing wholesome family life.

The statement's emphasis on preparing to receive as migrants in Latin America many thousands of Europe's displaced and "surplus" persons is an index of the responsible, Christian attitudes developed at Manizales. As a result, a new understanding is abroad in the Americas. It is to lead to further conferences and remedial measures in that area. Success there can only lead to parallel efforts in underdeveloped countries the world over. For the plight of the exploited Latin American peasant is a universal one.

Hence the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, if small in budget and personnel, has come to be potentially one of the important constructive forces operating in our troubled world.

NEXT WEEK

JOHN J. KANE writes about the effect of Catholic separatism in America:

"Every wave of Catholic immigration has found well-established institutions, ready to serve it and help preserve the Faith. But Catholic influences on American life have been much less than a Catholic population of almost thirty million might have been expected to make. Furthermore, a great deal of it has been negative. Too frequently it has taken the form of protests, picketing of theaters, voting against legislation without pressing for alternative measures to solve problems. So often Catholic attitudes have been all black and white without distinguishing the neutral grays. Mussolini was a great man because he signed a concordat with the Vatican. Franco is acceptable because he does not persecute Catholics. Child labor legislation is opposed because it may threaten the natural rights of parents. All Catholics, of course, have never shared such opinions, but an impression to that effect has been created."

GUARDING THE RAMPARTS

SOME weeks back, Theodore Kaghan was rash enough to make some decidedly rude remarks about Senator McCarthy's emissaries to Europe, the Messrs. Cohn and Schine. As matters turned out, his statements were bolder than they were prudent.

Returning to this country from his post in Germany for questioning before the Congressional Committee, Kaghan came armed with testimonials to the effectiveness of his anti-Communism from such European anti-Soviet stalwarts as Ernst Reuter, Mayor of beleaguered Berlin, and Leopold Figl, Chancellor of Austria, but the affidavits did him little good.

As far as the outsider could tell, Mr. Kaghan's crime consisted only of *lèse majesté* against the investigators, but that was serious enough. W. Scott McLeod, who is now the State Department Security Officer, gave Kaghan a neat choice: resign or be fired. Kaghan resigned.

Kaghan had left his wife and children in Europe. After submitting his resignation, he flew back to Germany to get them and to pick up his personal belongings. On the eve of his final departure for the United States, his colleagues held a farewell party in his honor. Although there were more refusals than would normally have been received, acceptances were very high, in view of the political climate of the times and the fact that Kaghan had become a "controversial figure." Among those who attended to honor Kaghan was the High Commissioner of Germany, James F. Conant.

Right now, it looks as if those who stayed away from the party were better judges of the times than those who attended. Reports from Europe are that security officers are already asking guests known to have attended the party for the names of other guests they saw there. Possibly in the end this incident will supply the perfect answer to an investi-

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gator's dream, a sort of inquisitorial perpetual-motion machine: some key guest at the Kaghan party could now be dismissed, then those rash enough to attend *his* farewell party could be checked, and so on *ad infinitum* into the Cohn and Schine night.

THE NEW FIRESIDE MANNER

THE success of the neat half-hour TV presentation of national problems by the President and three members of his Cabinet brings up a new element in the impact of television upon politics. Up to now one big anxiety expressed has had to do with the overwhelming advantages of political candidates who were telegenic in appearance and manner. This anxiety has tended to subside with the development of more flattering make-up and personal instruction in the TV art. (The high cost of TV time continues to confer certain advantages.)

The President-Cabinet performance, however, raises one question hardly susceptible to mere technical advances. The ease and informality achieved by this quartet of American leaders was the result of much rehearsal; it was also secured by prompting devices outside the viewer's range. It was a little sketch, or play, and as such involved make-believe, a judgment applicable to the program's oversimplification of the terrific problems facing this Administration. To bring some of these problems to the millions of American TV homes can be a genuine public service. The problem is how to do so authentically. Or is a little knowledge on public issues, misleading as it may be, preferable to none?

TRANSLATING A PLATITUDE

NOT so many years ago, there were still plenty of liberals around who considered it somehow a betrayal of their creed to concern themselves about matters of national security and military defense. Where Communism achieves a popular following, the theory went, its success is due to the poverty and discontent of the people; remove the conditions in which Communism flourishes, and you will eliminate the threat of Communism.

On one level, this idea was true enough. The long-range battle against Communism must necessarily involve far-reaching social reforms, aimed at the bitter poverty in which most of the people of the world live. But the theory is naive if it does not also take into account the present need of any free government to defend itself, by force of arms if necessary, against subversion from within and attack from without.

An indication of the great change that has come over liberal thinking in this matter may be found in the proceedings of the recent convention of the ADA, which vigorously opposed the cuts in defense expenditures being made by the Eisenhower Administration. But unfortunately what was once a liberal platitude has now been translated into Republican jargon and taken over by the conservatives.

We must trim the defense budget, the plea now goes, because a sound economy is, after all, the best defense against Communism. Like its unlamented liberal counterpart, the statement is true as far as it goes, but it just does not go far enough. A sound economy is a goal we should strive for, just as we must work for global social reforms. But cutting necessary defense spending at this time in the name of a sound economy and a hard-money policy is sheer blindness. No matter how hard the money, it will never stop a Soviet tank, in Indochina or anywhere else.

THE COMMERCIAL TOUCH

THERE has recently been some agitation in Great Britain for an end to the government's monopoly of radio and television communications. The advantages of commercial competition have been argued and the diversity of programming in the United States has been cited as an example.

Now, it is said, the cause of free-enterprise radio and TV in Britain has been set back at least a decade. The reason? Ironically, the manners of those most ardent apologists for a "free" system—the American commercial networks themselves.

These networks were offered, and gladly accepted, free use of the BBC films of Elizabeth II's coronation. There was a "gentleman's agreement," however, that the films would be presented in the United States without undue commercialization.

The agreement was broken by some American networks. They presented the films, but they interrupted them, even at the solemn religious moments, with advertising of the most obnoxious sort. Example: the Queen is enthroned. Flash—Here's a car that's a real queen too! Now, back to the ceremony.

The British are angry. They have a right to be. The networks involved have, in a display of bad manners which can only be described as nauseating, provided an object lesson in the evils of the adman's control of their medium. They deserve whatever set-back may now come to them. And our British friends deserve an apology. This was commercial broadcasting at its worst.

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THE KOREAN WAR

THIS war began quietly on a Sunday morning. Three years later, in another June, it is coming to a close, the story of its guttering making dutiful headlines.

In the time between, one hundred and thirty-five thousand Americans were killed or wounded, and a multiple of that number of Koreans, soldiers and civilians, were casualties of enemy action, disease, and the cold. Korea itself has been burnt out, like a stubble field.

Like all wars, this one has statistics which convey tragedy as mathematics convey interstellar space. The numbers are impalpable. The individuals and their apprehensions are necessary for understanding.

To one who was on the periphery of this thing, this June recalls faces and sounds. It recalls a seven-foot giant who was little better than a moron, and had been drafted by mistake. Clumsy, left-footed, he spent fourteen weeks learning obscenities in an attempt to cope with a brutal new life. He was too stupid to bathe; finally the men who slept near him led him to the shower room and scrubbed him. It recalls a frightened boy, the only son of a widower, who in training took the pin out of a grenade and then stood holding it, ashen-faced, terrified to throw it. It recalls a small-town tough who never drove his car less than eighty to a hundred miles per hour on weekend passes, and beat a cadreman's face black and blue one dusky spring evening. When his orders for Korea came, his family protested to a friend who was an Army commander, and the small-town tough never left home.

Those were the lives wrenched into new channels by this war. What they would have been without war one cannot know. There were those about whose lives there is no doubt. A man named Silvers (four months with him constantly, and who remembers more than his name?): he went over and came back a few months later, laced with machine gun wounds. There was a little lieutenant, commissioned in the field in World War II, who fanatically double-timed the company everywhere it went. He went over, and the story is that he died. Seventy-five per cent of that training company went to Korea in summer, 1951. How many lived? We will have no class reunions.

One remembers names: Stoneman, Drake, *USS General Mann,* "The Tokyo Boogie," "China Nights" —camps, ships, Japanese songs. Other things are remembered: The dense stink of even the best troopships, the noisy circulation and metabolism changes of the vast steel organism going on all around you night and day. It was living in the belly of a machine: the inevitable rhythm of movement, rising and falling, the sea rattling against the hull. There were dancing girls on the dock, solemnly turning and swaying in bright, unreal kimonos. Camp Drake was processing center for all Army troops arriving in the Far East, and gave the impression of a vast unpainted barn. There, in forty-eight hours you could be fed, clothed, lectured to, shot with serum, could sign your will and draw a rifle and zero it. From there the ships went to Korea.

One recalls something else about Drake, the uniforms: Belgians in mottled camouflage tunics; Frenchmen wearing (of course) berets; Norwegians in gray; Ethiopians in American khakis; Indian medics, some in maroon paratrooper berets, some, Sikhs, in maroon turbans. There are books in the Camp Drake Service Club for men to leave messages for home-town friends, or simply for posterity: "Harry J., Opelika, Ala., Drake 7/1/50, Korea 24th Div Feb. 50—Oct. 50, Drake 12/14/50. God Brought Me Back Safe." Messages are there in Thai, Spanish, Italian, Swedish, French, Dutch, Korean, Turkish. One recalls the Greek soldier in Tokyo who spoke not a word of English, French or pidgin Japanese, but had a picture of himself with the liaison officers he chauffeured. Showing it around, he spoke cheerful Greek, and his barracks-mates spoke cheerful English, and understanding was there.

That is the chief impact of Far Eastern duty: solidarity among nations. In spite of friction, in spite of trigger-happy Turks shooting up Allied patrols (while a frantic patrol leader radios back four echelons to find someone who speaks enough Turkish to turn it off), in spite of drunken Australians abusing Japanese porters, and heavy-footed GI drivers clipping Korean civilians, the fact stood. Here were Koreans, a decimated, oppression-ridden people, fighting back heroically, holding, in the end, two-thirds of the battle line. Here were UN soldiers from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, the Americas and Europe, many from nations fighting wars and uprisings of their own elsewhere, holding, in the end, well over half as much of the line as the Americans. Here were medical groups from UN countries and others, supplied from half of the world, from Japan to Iran.

It was imperfect and unfulfilled, as the victory is incomplete. But those people were there with us, and many of them died. Who did they die for? For Korea, a land nobody ever heard of, where women wear white for mourning. The Koreans will not now be happy, or be knowledgeable democrats for all of this. The Chinese will not repudiate their leaders or their ambitions. The Russians do not surrender. But something was saved by this. Mercy stopped the night for Korea. Who dares say that is nothing?

WILLIAM PFAFF.

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The Catholic Reactionary

AN ENTHUSIASTIC DISTRIBUTOR OF BLINKERS, MUZZLES, HANDCUFFS, GAGS AND EARMUFFS, HE FINDS IN THE CHURCH NOT FULFILLMENT, BUT ARMOR.

ERIK VON KUEHNELT - LEDDIHN

BY this time "reaction" has become such a glib label that one has to define it before application. A reactionary—if the rules of etymology mean anything—is a person opposing by principle or habit, knowingly and methodically, all current dominant notions and ideas, or, at least, the very spirit of the times, the *Zeitgeist,* as it is reflected in the mind of the reactionary himself.

The term "reactionary," like the term "conservative," has a meaning only in reference to *other* trends, ideas or even to situations. Yet whereas the conservative, at least, is a man saying "yes" to a given period and its standard set of values, which, rightly or wrongly, he wants to conserve, the reactionary's stand is primarily negative. Not only is he rejecting the present, but also the future whose dim outlines he seems to visualize with mounting distaste. Thus the Catholic Reactionary, endowed with a pitiless eye, sees only the evil aspects of our world which he opposes either with real fury or in a spirit of sour petulance and disdain.

We have no reason to doubt that the Catholic Reactionary, no less than his opposite number, the Catholic Assimilationist, is motivated by a genuine worry about the future of the Church. Without any genuine hope for a final victory of truth over untruth, of justice over crime, of Saint Michael over Satan, he thinks that the cause of the Mystical Body is best served by a strategy based on spiritless retreats and intermittent vengeful counter-attacks. In these "military actions" a certain cowardice is mixed with a real lack of charity, if not with a teeth-gnashing hatred.

Whoever truly knows Catholicism in its theological, philosophical and historic aspects will wonder where the roots of this odd phenomenon, the Catholic Reactionary, actually are to be found. After all, change (in the sense of development and addition), movement and variation have always been the main characteristics of Catholicism, which Barth considers to be "basically dialectic." Saint Vincent of Lerins emphasized "Catholic progressivism" as early as the fifth century when with ringing words he wrote in his *Commonitorium* about the *profectus Ecclesiae*. A growing volume of the faith militates against a static concept. There exists, moreover, a growth of the Church in a geographic sense, a constant succession of generations, a ceaseless shedding and assuming of a vast diversity of cultural forms. Catholicism in general and ecclesiastic forces in particular have been the most dynamic factors in our cultural and intellectual evolution ever since the Church was able to leave the dark recesses of the catacombs. A cursory glance at the Old World will reveal that there is hardly anything which did not spring from Catholicism directly or indirectly: neither Luther nor Calvin, neither Rousseau nor Robespierre, neither Marx nor Proudhon can be imagined without a Christian-Catholic "pre-history."

Yet at the end of the eighteenth and in the nineteenth century the faith became truly a *religio depopulata;* it was swept from the market-place and banished from the big cities with their pulsating life; it found refuge largely in the tiny circles of a tradition-bound nobility and in the unchanged quietness of the rural districts. The newly emerging proletariat and the middle-classes broke with the faith as they had broken with the past; whatever remained of it among the burghers was soon marred by a highly negative spirit made up of a certain pharisaical self-righteousness mixed with a combative drive to destroy through mechanical means the evilness of a world in apostasy.

In this attitude we see an element which preceded the establishment of the Catholic ghetto of the last one hundred and fifty years, a permanent lure which the Church had to fight almost from the moment of its inception. Symbolized by the Sword of Peter which severed the ear of Malchus, this is the terrible temptation, often barely resisted: to establish God's Kingdom through sheer power—with or without the aid of the secular arm.

NATURALLY, the origins of the Catholic Reactionary cannot be explained simply in the light of purely historical or sociological circumstances. To identify him exclusively with the actively Catholic minority in the urban middle class would be most unjust. The bourgeois spirit itself is by no means tied to a social layer or estate;

Mr. Kuehnelt-Leddihn is an Austrian novelist and political writer. His most recent book is "Liberty or Equality."

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it can affect royalty and proletarians, artists and priests.

Yet the Catholic Reactionary is a "type," so formed almost from birth. He is a person to whom the Church and the faith are not a final fulfillment, a frame to hold a brilliantly painted canvas, but an armor, a corset without which he simply could not exist. It was his fortune to have been born into the Catholic Church or to have found her accidentally on his way, after another corset had, for some reason, ceased to offer its services and had to be dispensed with. Thus it is not the very essence of the Church that attracts him, not the Grace inherent in the Sacraments tying him to the Mystical Body, not the appeal "Ye are Priests and Kings" made by Saint Thomas (and also by Peter) to all believers, not the freedom, the greatness, nay, even the elegance and the humor imparted to us by truth everlasting. These hardly affect the Catholic Reactionary, who is primarily moved by the organizational aspects of the Church Militant, with its laws, rules and bylaws which he tends to place above the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount and the message of the Epistles.

The Catholic Reactionary is a man of prohibitions and "don'ts," a man who has reversed Saint Thomas' scale of virtues, placing charity lowest, ranking the moral behind the intellectual virtues, and locating, needless to say, chastity at the top of the ladder, high above fortitude or justice. Affection, generosity, intellectuality play for him merely a minor role. "Prudence" (with a liberal admixture of cowardice and fear) is his watchword. A battle nobly lost he cherishes less than a cheap victory. And there is nothing he is more afraid of than "scandal," taking this word in an everyday, not a theological sense, since it is "appearing" and not "being" he is most concerned with. He has never accepted the words of Saint Bernard: *Melius est ut scandalum oriatur, quam ut veritas relinquatur.*

Whereas the Catholic Assimilationist and Leftist causes great trouble by sowing confusion in the ranks of the faithful, the Catholic Reactionary with his aggressiveness and his emphasis on the accidentals of the Faith is one of the main reasons why so many of the very best *extra muros* are being kept outside of the walls of the Perennial City. Without real sovereignty of mind or discriminating sensibility, the Catholic Reactionary is unable to adopt whatever is positive, whatever is true and lasting outside of the Church, because he ignores (and wants to ignore) the fact that the Jansenist thesis of the impossibility of Grace outside of the Mystical Body has been condemned by the Popes.

It is not surprising that the Catholic Reactionary gets frightened by all "trading with the enemy," which to him smacks of treason. No "association with infidels" for him! And so small is his self-confidence, his pride, his manliness, his trust in divine intercession, that he avoids all contacts with the very persons most desperately in need of the light of Truth.

It is no wonder that this is so, since the Catholic Reactionary believes in an explanation of history which can only be called the "conspirational thesis." He sees the whole world around his beleaguered ghetto as an intricate network of conspiracies. "Liberals," Masons, Orthodox Jews, Communists, Socialists, crypto-Fascists, Protestants, manufacturers of contraceptives, feminists, designers of bathing suits, movie moguls, yellow journalists, Satan worshippers, Zionists, modern artists, agents of foreign powers, biologists—all, in his view, are joined in an unholy alliance whose purpose is to destroy the Church. The fact that on various occasions *some* of these groups actually do line up together against Rome is in the eyes of the Catholic Reactionary valid proof of a permanent secret understanding among them.

HERE we encounter another trait of the Catholic Reactionary—nationalism. Marxists *profess* to be internationalists. Since the Catholic Reactionary always takes his cue from the enemy's pretensions, he therefore adopts nationalism and "patriotism"—according to Dr. Johnson the "last refuge of a scoundrel"—forgetting that his Church stands above the nations. The only redeeming feature of this vice lies in the fact that it precludes the possibility of a Fifth International—the dark specter of a globe-girdling alliance of all Catholic Reactionaries.

Nationalism attracts the Catholic Reactionary through its narrowness, its parochialism, the chances it offers to be "agin" others. He is a patrioteer; if other nations also happen to be Catholic, their Catholicism, of course, is highly suspect. He is a man of monopolies. His nation, and his nation alone, has a lien on the Church, and it hardly needs stressing that the institutions of his country all enjoy a very special blessing from God Almighty. If his nation is a monarchy (or has recently been one), kingship is divinely ordained. If it happens to be a republic of long standing, democracy is Our Lord's command. But true happiness beckons to him only if he can drag religion into party politics, because then his partisanship can reach a higher pitch and can be raised to the level of hysterics.

Apart from the foes within and without the Church he is certain that the arch enemy of mankind is sex. (*Vide* his perverted order of virtues.) He is a knight errant for "decency," fighting "sin" as one fights a dragon; for him these terms have an exclusively sexual meaning. He also succeeds splendidly in using his indignation about the sexual trespasses of others to manifest towards the wayward a pent-up wrath which sometimes appears to be caused by a secret, subconscious envy.

This positively sinful absence of all sympathy on the part of the Catholic Reactionary is often combined with a tremendous vanity about his own "temperance" and "modesty." When it comes to reading matter, he is all for a strict censorship, but his provincialism makes him

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singularly unfit to distinguish between art and pornography. Luckily, he rarely opens the Bible, and if he yields to such theological curiosity, he fortunately never strays from the beaten path to get lost in the "lower depths" of the Old Testament. Reading Leviticus would probably leave him with the acute feeling that he had fallen into mortal sin.

He would receive a great jolt if he were to study Church art of past ages or to travel, thus getting an opportunity to see Eros or even sex represented *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*—often, but not always, survivals of his own dear "good, old times." He then would behold the obscene demons over the gates of Bourges, Saint Etienne, Saint Mary Magdalen's beautiful torso in the cathedral of Pisa, the frescoes of Vasari in the *Duomo* of Florence, the bare, marble bodies of the kings and queens of France in Saint Denis, the frescoes of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel, the naked Saint Catherine of Alexandria broken over the wheel on a modern stain glass window of Fribourg's Saint Nicholas, not to mention the details of Saint Agatha's festival in Catania.

If a man, the Catholic Reactionary is usually a misogynist. His female counterpart is frequently an ardent feminist. Their nationalism enters into a curious alliance with their puritan Jansenism: they believe all foreigners to be sex fiends while their own nation figures in their mind as a wellspring of chastity.

The Catholic Reactionary is, naturally, opposed to organized labor, but he is also against the aristocracy, the intellectuals, the army officers, artists and seamen. He dislikes diplomats, journalists, circus performers, night-club singers and skiing champions. He suspects comedians and cartoonists. In his eyes they are not "respectable." At one and the same time he is a "middle-of-the-roader" and a believer in absolutes or, at least, in one absolute: mediocrity and its pitiless defense.

The Catholic Reactionary loves policemen and gendarmes. He strongly favors conscription and almost every form of regimentation and regulation. But his most ardent enthusiasm is reserved for "the clergy." He does not see in the individual priest a man who has shouldered a very special Cross and who has made the *sacrifice du matin* to Our Lord in Heaven. He does not recognize in him a man who has risked almost everything in a Divine Game in which a glowing sanctity and a particular dry rot of the soul are the frightening alternatives spared to most laymen. No, the priest to him is a master who takes every decision out of his hands, who issues infallible pronouncements on all conceivable subjects, who has absolute command in the defense of the beleaguered ghetto, who is the very fishbone in the corset containing the Catholic Reactionary's flabby soul.

More than any priest or bishop, more than a hundred Cardinal Seguras, the Catholic Reactionary is guilty of making anti-clericalism, the permanent alibi of anti-Catholicism, appear a plausible attitude. And needless to say, he himself avoids all responsibility in his various skirmishes and invariably takes shelter behind the cassock, hiding just as a child does behind the skirts of its mother. As a real *punaise de sacristie,* never moving beyond the shadow of the church tower, he never adds a square inch of the wilderness to the Kingdom of God.

YET the Catholic Reactionary is not really keen on conquest, but on preservation, on defense. Hence his enthusiasm for censorship, for boycotts, for the demonstration of numerical strength. He is not the son of a free Church, but rather the sycophant, the informer, the flunkey of a small, cornered sect, of a real *lucifugax gens.*

If he merely wanted to put the clock back, one still would respect him in a way. Don Quixote, after all, is a tragic and lovable figure. But the Catholic Reactionary is an enthusiastic distributor of blinkers, muzzles, handcuffs, black glasses, apron-strings, gags and earmuffs. His eyes shine when he hears that somewhere in the world the arm of the law has intervened in order to insure the victory of faith and morals. If Protestant missionaries are ejected from a town on Lake Titicaca, if attendance at Mass on weekdays is made compulsory in a school, if an immoral book has been banned in faraway Boston, if a meeting of "freethinkers" has been disrupted with stink bombs or with beer mugs, or if a leftist paper is suspended, he seems almost mystically transported. His joy reaches new heights if he hears that the police have issued a bylaw regarding the length of bathing suits or that a revised morality code has been promulgated in Hollywood, because he believes that ethics can be enforced by regulations and morality measured with rules.

The Catholic Reactionary has limitless veneration for the Middle Ages in which he sees the fulfillment of Catholicism. From humanism he instinctively recoils, and to him the Renaissance is nothing but paganism incarnate "preparing the Reformation" (which actually was a late medieval revolt *against* the Renaissance, *against* Humanism, *against* this Catholic synthesis of Truth and Beauty, of the intellect and the senses). Yet if by some magic he were to find himself suddenly in the Middle Ages, he would be made dreadfully unhappy by so tough, so "immoral," so intellectual and anti-clerical a period; he surely would go down on his knees praying to be whisked "back where he came from"—to 1953? Oh no, to 1888.

OF the dignity of man the Catholic Reactionary has little conception. Since he is no lover, but a professional hater, he dreams of the re-introduction of the cat-o'-nine-tails and the thumb-screw for delinquents. If you object to his views, he will call you a humanist, meaning a humanitarian. He is almost ready to make a novena to Saint Joseph for the restoration of capital pun-

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ishment, which is now abolished by most Catholic countries. It does not occur to him that the mere idea of Catholics, even priests, sitting up late at night writing books, essays and letters to editors in defense of the axe, the electric chair, the rope, the guillotine and the gas chamber is truly demoniacal. Since the execution of criminals has also been attacked by neo-pagans, the Catholic Reactionary considers it his sacred duty to rush as fast as he can in the opposite direction.

The most terrible characteristic of the Catholic Reactionary—his lovelessness toward sinners—shows up not only in his enthusiastic advocacy of capital punishment, but also in his outcries against the "soft" treatment of jail-inmates. On such matters he refuses to "follow Christ" and to lead a profoundly Christian existence. (Just look at the wry if not disgusted expression on his face if you use the word "'Christian" emphatically. Might this term not be an invitation to "interdenominationalism"?)

Children no less than prisoners he likes to see subjected to physical discomforts. He is a fanatic disciplinarian and a real puritan. If you cite to him the Portuguese proverb which says that the good ones will become better by punishment while the bad ones get worse, he will sourly reply that you are a "humanist" and that retribution is a matter of "justice" (meaning that we have to see to it that we are not cheated by Providence).

Jews he dislikes, because they dare to be "different," and whoever is different is an enemy. For intellectuals and artists he reserves a special hatred. In the former he sees the sworn enemies of his faith, in the latter the antagonists of his morals. The freedom of their "bohemian" lives he publicly censures, but secretly envies. Without knowing it, he is a Lutheran despising reason, and a Wahhabi in his horror for everything appealing to the senses. Thus he rejects truth and beauty alike, and he is truly more dead than alive.

IN his tastes the Catholic Reactionary is "conservative," that is, he sticks to the notions of 1888. Modern art to him is (for want of a better label) "bolshevistic" and a modern church nothing less than blasphemy. The only modernization he will tolerate is a coat of phosphorescent material over crucifixes—of a design which repelled Lourdes visitors way back under Napoleon III. North of the Alps, the only type of church in which he gladly worships must be "medieval," must be Romanesque or Gothic in style—preferably in the 1888 edition with a Beuronian interior decoration, a linoleum floor and altar adorned with woodwork reminding one of sugar-coated pretzels.

In the forms of his worship, the Catholic Reactionary has an unerring nose for the non-essentials of his faith. An addict of blessed medals, he finds the zenith of his devotion in endless novenas, in the reading of doubtful tracts and even more suspect "hagiographies," in the blind belief in fake "miracles" and unauthentic "prophecies," following his natural bend toward a spurious mysticism. Thus he oscillates among an avoidance of the genuinely supernatural, an attraction by the darkest forms of superstition, an infatuation with pure magic and a real obsession with mediocrity masquerading as "moderation."

He has a few glib catch-phrases always on hand with which he hopes to deal with all situations, as, for instance, "I'm all for liberty, but not for licence!" Not only does he cover his cowardice with a false humility when occasion arises by uttering a clarion call to "prudence," but when he feels a real resistance mounting he carefully avoids offering a frank opinion. In such a case he will merely cite "authorities."

The theology of the Catholic Reactionary shows up very well in his conversations. It is a theology which places sin in the center and wildly rotates around this point. Saint Augustine's *Dilige et fac quod vis,* the great trust enwrapped by the burning love for God, has given way to the scrupulous Bishop Jansenius' sad epigones. Obviously one is bound in duty to strive for personal salvation, but the best road to Heaven is the Holy Folly of the Cross, the surrender to absolute charity—not a constant morbid introspection (*l'homme scrupuleux taquine Dieu,* said Père Faber) nor an ingenious bookkeeping of sins, indulgences, good works and merits.

Actually this kind of "theology" in its acute sin-consciousness is secretly satanocentric; it sees the world peopled by a race largely marked out for damnation, a world full of demons and forerunners of Anti-Christ. The Catholic Reactionary visualizes himself in solitary purity and righteousness, and shares the feelings of Tertullian (an early, very gifted Catholic Reactionary) who said that the source of the greatest happiness for the departed in Heaven will be the sight of the Roman Emperors roasting in Hell. . . . The Beatific Vision is not on the top of the Catholic Reactionary's agenda.

The Catholic Reactionary is marked by a freezing absence of humor. Saint Thomas considered the lack of mirth to be positively sinful, and if you cited this fact to the Catholic Reactionary, he undoubtedly would break out into a dutiful but vacant grin from time to time. There would be no resonance in his heart, for his eye is blind to the comic incongruities of a fallen world.

He is a terribly mournful middle-of-the-roader, this Catholic Reactionary. Without knowing it, he is one of the most bitter enemies of the Church, a real obstacle to its expansion and, as a negative factor in its whole existence, comparable to his antagonist on the opposite end of the scale.

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FROM BRITAIN

Crown, Color And Witchdoctors

Cardiff

THE Rhondda Valley is so red that Labor runs even the Conservative Clubs. Maybe that has more to do with the licensing laws than with politics. It is not everywhere in Wales that you can get a drink at the time you need it, and miners are thirsty men. But still, it is symptomatic. Till very recently, each election was a duel between Harry Pollitt, Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and the local miners' candidate, and the Pollitt vote was not small. And indeed there are plenty of reasons why Rhondda people should see red. In Tonypandy they have never quite forgotten the troops sent in against strikers forty years ago by the then Home Secretary, Winston Churchill. The valley as a whole lost a quarter of its people by migration between 1929 and the war, and unemployment as late as 1935 was around forty per cent. Prosperity has come back to the Rhondda since then, but not as yet either beauty or convenience of living.

But, driving up the valley on the Saturday before the Coronation, it was obvious that the top of the poll today, with a percentage vote that would pass muster even in a People's Democracy, is Elizabeth the Second. Naturally, it varies from place to place. You will find one group of houses bare and dark, without a flash of Coronation color. You go further, it may be through the center of Pontypridd, or along some of the side roads in the hills to the north where there is nothing but coal and sheep, and you have a criss-cross ceiling of bunting fluttering between the houses, and the men out on ladders to put the finishing touches. At Trehafod the population was in the street (*the* street) to watch their own Coronation procession; the miners' band, the children with a red, white and blue maypole, and various exotic figures in grease paint laid on like Boadicea, marching from the pithead at the top of street to the pithead at the bottom.

On decorations, the pubs on the whole do best. But there are not many houses in the Rhondda without a Union Jack or a red, white, and blue streamer across the window, and as often as not a cut-out of the Queen and the Duke. The District Council offices at Ton Pentre do pretty well. And police stations make an interesting study. There is nothing quite so bleak as a drab miner's cottage, undecorated, with only its County Constabulary sign for a warning to Coronation revellers. On the other hand, there are stations whose colors leave the pubs standing. And I think I liked best the Black Maria which I passed just outside Newport, driven at the regulation thirty miles an hour by a stern, bolt-upright constable, with a Union Jack glued with mathematical precision three inches from the bottom left hand corner of his windshield.

IT is like that everywhere. We are a bit restrained in North Oxford. But even we have enough children around to make sure that no bourgeois nonsense is stood. Besides, a surprising number of people here have begged, bought, or by subtler means acquired tickets for The Route itself. X Street, Battersea, which is sub-proletarian (a good piece of the men have been "inside"—you see why I suppressed the name), has raised two hundred twenty pounds to take the children and, Heaven help them, their mothers to the Zoo, and for Coronation par-

ties for old and young alike. In the countryside, as for instance in my native Kent village of Westerham—*civis Romanus sum,* a fellow-parishioner of Churchill—the usual machinery of Vicar, British Legion, and Women's Institute has been at work. Fairs and cricket matches have been planned, marquees have been built, buckets of tea have been ordered. And decorations, as everywhere, have been strung from all obvious and some less obvious supports.

Decorations are an intriguing and sometimes a sore point. It was obviously right that Paramount Film Service should choose purple, and that the Inland Revenue's Cardiff office should be draped in somber clouds, but with a narrow gold lining beneath. In London, the Ministry of Works has done an excellent job on The Route. But there are less happy cases. The Town Hall in Oxford is graced with two bulbous, rough-cast white plaster cherubs, doing a dive-bombing act with the Crown of England onto a profile of the Queen of which one can only say that it overdoes the Windsor nose. A local artist, cut to the quick, climbed up the scaffolding the night before this performance was due to open. And when next

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morning the curtains were pulled, the cherubs had come out in chicken-pox, but with green spots.

AND what does it all mean? For some people, of course, it means a very nice bit of business. Those who do not cash in directly can do it by allusion. "You know, my dear," says the old and experienced Peeress to her young and beautiful companion in the Aga cooker advertisement, as each gulps her thermos in the Abbey: "I think my Aga has been alight ever since the last Coronation." Ten tenants of Ystradgynlais appealed to the local Council to have their houses painted for the Coronation, for no brush had been near them since 1932. The Council however turned them down, for it would create a dangerous precedent. For consolation, it told them that it *might* be possible to paint them for the Eisteddfod, which allows the official machinery a month or two more to revolve.

More constructive, in result and even in intention, was the use made of the Coronation by a YCW young families group. What is the greatest difficulty in the way of developing the apostolate of the family to the family? Contact; for it is difficult to love one's neighbor until one at any rate remotely knows him. And what is a Coronation, if not a chance to collect from the neighbors, to arrange street parties with them, to string decorations across the road into their houses, and generally to get so that one can walk in anywhere along the road for a cup of tea without feeling out of place?

Then there are those, quite a few of them, for whom this is simply the Royal Carnival; the chance to have a whale of a good time, a lot of it paid for by neighbors, the Council, or the Government.

But I do not think that even the carnival, let alone business and profits, is the keynote of Britain today. Feelings run much deeper. One keynote is certainly unity in diversity. From one point of view, this is the new, democratic version of the old pride of Empire. Up and down the country, the flags of India and Pakistan fly in the place of honor, alongside the Union Jack or the flags of Canada or Australia. Fifty-odd Parliaments of the Commonwealth were represented when the Queen spoke in Westminster Hall before the Coronation. Fifty or more nations' youth movements are represented in the Commonwealth Youth Conference. We have spread free institutions, helped new nations to birth, and laid the foundations of social as well as political advance in backward countries, as no power in history has done, or is doing today. We built a bridge long ago between Europe and America. We built one more recently between the West and Asia. We are building one now between Africa and the countries of the North Atlantic. We have seen our Empire collapse, but in that idealistic sense in which Lenin spoke of the withering away of the State. Compulsion has gone or is going, and is replaced not with anarchy but with effective cooperation between free nations. We know the difficulties still to be overcome. But we are very conscious this week of what has been achieved already. And we are not apologizing for it.

This unity in diversity extends even beyond the Commonwealth. It has been obvious in the last few weeks that the ideals and the continuity symbolized by the British monarchy have a message also for the rest of Europe. British people in their turn are very willing to admit the other peoples of Europe, if not quite to the status of Commonwealth countries, at any rate to an honorable place in the celebrations. One of the big successes of Coronation year has been a scheme for bringing over parties of boys and girls from the Continent as civic guests of British towns. The London boroughs have played a big part. The docks area, the most war-devastated area of all London, has just absorbed a large party of young Germans, with immense success all round. There is an obvious moral; that Britain has something, summed up in the monarchy, which should enable it to do for Europe what it has done for the Commonwealth as the leader of free but effective cooperation. Perhaps the Coronation experience will help a little to get that through.

Unity in diversity is as a matter of fact the keynote even of Britain's own internal celebrations. The Queen, and the Coronation, symbolize our common ideals. But "we" who say and celebrate this are not individuals, or crowds. It may look like that along The Route. But the real unit of celebration is "our" street, our village, our Church, our Scotland or Wales. Cardiff is a cosmopolitan city, not usually noted for Welsh nationalism. But Red Dragon flags were running short weeks before the Coronation. The anemic dragonlet on the front of my car does not prove professorial indifference to the proud, fire-breathing splendor of the true beast. It merely shows that Woolworth's forgot how the essential federalism of British life comes to the surface at times like these. By the time I got there, all that was left of the litter of dragons was the runt.

Then, of course, there is personal respect for the Queen. She symbolizes our ideals, *ex officio*. But we do not need the gush in the *Graphic* to convince us that she lives them as well. The editor of the *New Statesman* may call it "middle-class respectability." Most of the rest of us prefer simply to say that she has what we want.

HOW far do people see a genuinely religious significance in the Coronation? Is the ceremony in the Abbey, are the innumerable Civic Services with the Mayor and Corporation marching to them in procession in full robes, merely part of the general symbolism, or have they a special and different importance of their own? Let me quote again the editor of the *New Statesman*. Reason, he says, has triumphed. There are still sin-

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ister forces at work giving us more religion on the BBC and more monarchy in the newspapers. The Coronation spirit is akin to that of fascism and Senator McCarthy. Yet, basically, it is sound enough; for it combines the fun of a Cinderella carnival, glass coach and all, with a rational symbolism. No one any longer, says Mr. Kingsley Martin, believes that solving the dollar gap depends on prayer and incantations rather than on the skill of businessmen and scientists. And neither does anyone today see in the Coronation the magic powers once attributed to witchdoctors.

Well, I don't know. I think more of us, and not only Catholics or other practicing Christians, are on the side of the witchdoctors than Mr. Martin allows. Even as regards businessmen and scientists, it makes some difference whether a scientist's second name is Galahad or Fuchs. And it may be that the qualities of a Galahad have something to do with prayer and the grace of God. It is no easy task, as Edward VIII found, to face a lifetime as the symbol of a nation's and a Commonwealth's ideals. There also, grace may have its uses. The Queen's own Christmas appeal, "pray for me," found a very wide response, sometimes in unexpected places. In Belfast the tide of bunting stops where the Catholic and nationalist quarters begin. But there is many a Republican presbytery elsewhere in Britain where the score of Masses has been mounting steadily ever since that appeal went out. English religion today is most of it a pretty woolly affair, and I doubt if most people who feel that the Coronation has a religious significance could say just what that significance was. But I am pretty sure that it is only a minority which fails to see in it something more than politics, social symbolism, or fun, games, and profits.

MICHAEL P. FOGARTY.

THE STAGE

ME AND JULIET

WHAT can ail Messrs. Rodgers & Hammerstein? Alone and palely loitering in the counting house, vision blurred by the dusty profusion of witch's gold, they have failed to give their new musical either the polish of artifice or the savor of life. "Me and Juliet" closes the season with neither a bang nor a whimper, but only a discreet and well-modulated tremolo. Two such accomplished wizards, in collusion with such crafty associates as George Abbott and Robert Alton, have not succeeded in projecting this glossy fiction into the climate of distinction.

A quiet opening conveys something of the texture of reality: a handful of dancers lounging about the prosaic daylight stage of a theatre. But within the briefest space, their modest actuality has been submerged in a raucous crescendo of cliché: lethal sandbags plummet from a catwalk; a maddened stagehand prowls in and out among the chorus girls, and there is a stirring pugilistic bout in the box office, between the unopened sacks of mail orders. As observers of their profession, Messrs. Rodgers & Hammerstein seem to me, at the very least, lurid, routine and sentimental; one contemplates, with considerable amusement, the kind of drastic discipline such an insurgent crew as they portray would incur from an Equity red in tooth and claw. Sandbags, indeed.

The verbal clatter of this spurious novelette is punctuated regularly by a musical score at once agreeable, rather mechanical, facile in statement and thin in sentiment. "Marriage Type Love," "No Other Love" and "It's Me" charm (they almost depress, too, in the infinity of reprises Mr. Rodgers has permitted) but the high romantic sensibility of "South Pacific" and the artful freshness of "Oklahoma!" have been obscured by a thick Broadway gloss.

What disturbs more is a persistent vein of tastelessness. It erupts in George Abbott's staging: he denies equally to moments of wit or sentiment their full weight, muddying each with the counterfeit of its opposite. And the composers offend with two intolerable numbers, one of which, "The Big Black Giant"—or is it bug? no matter: it's big, brother, and it's *black*—assumes the audience as a sort of collective monster which must be cajoled, coddled and pandered to. An alarming, revealing view. The second concerns the euphoric sensations of a gentleman on a binge, and quite succinctly suggests —in tone and approach—a Yale University report on the social attitudes of the problem alcoholic.

An agreeable cast, rather pallid but for the vivacious Joan McCracken, displays both energy and skill in these exercises, but "Me and Juliet" demonstrates again that wizardry is inconstant, that it cannot be summoned nor harassed nor hastily invoked as a corrective for the inadequacies of either nature or art. (*At the Majestic.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

THE FAULT, DEAR BRUTUS, IS NOT IN OUR STARS

THE big question confronting anyone with courage enough to convert a Shakespeare play into a movie is whether it should be good cinema or good Shakespeare. The ill-fated stabs at "Romeo and Juliet" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in the 1930s weren't particularly good anything; but the English version of "As You Like It" at least had a rollicking sense of comedy.

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Then Laurence Olivier came along with "Henry V" and provided what is the happiest combination of Shakespeare and cinema to date. He followed this with "Hamlet," a play that was extremely difficult to film; Shakespeare's lines suvived the ordeal very well, but only occasionally did the handsome black-and-white photography attain true cinematic fluidity; the real thrills of the picture were in the sound track, not in the photography.

And that brings us to "Julius Caesar," Hollywood's latest effort to prove that it too can film Shakespeare as Shakespeare. M-G-M has successfully proved its point. But I suspect that if Shakespeare had been the scriptwriter on this project, he would have taken more liberties with his original play than did Producer John Houseman.

As it stands, "Caesar" seldom breaks into pure cinema; the assassination makes exciting movie material, and Director Joseph L. Mankiewicz' skillful use of the camera in the scenes immediately following the murder, especially during Antony's "Cry havoc" speech and his funeral address, adds much to the drama. The battle scenes at Philippi are effective and so are the episodes in Brutus' tent. But no matter how you slice it, "Julius Caesar" is a movie that depends on talk—awfully good talk in speech after speech.

But whatever faults "Caesar" may have as a movie cannot be blamed in any way on the cast assembled by Houseman. John Gielgud stands out, in the most perfect casting. As Cassius he is not only lean and hungry looking as the leader of the conspirators but also waspish as a man with an itching palm who wants things run his way. Equally effective is James Mason as Brutus, the man of thought who joins the assassins because theirs is the only way out, and whose insistence on fair play and honor wins him praise from Antony at the end ("This was a man") and defeat.

It is Marlon Brando, as Mark Antony, who will surprise most movie goers. While he has not dropped all of Kowalski, he has spit out most of the mush, and he delivers his speeches, including the "Friends, Romans, Countrymen" which had to be handled carefully, very well. Louis Calhern makes Caesar properly puffy, self-important and ambitious. Edmond O'Brien, as impulsive Casca, adds a rough-and-ready touch to the proceedings and is particularly good in the early scene in which he describes Antony's offering the crown to Caesar. In fact the cast is good all the way down the line.

"Julius Caesar" has a great deal to say to audiences today; and those who want to draw parallels to our times can easily do so. This version of it may not be the most imaginative movie ever made, but it is certainly top-drawer Shakespeare and stimulating fare for men who, like Shakespeare's conspirators, are willing to "think of the world."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"A PROTESTANT LOOKS AT CATHOLICS"

Fresno, Calif.

TO the Editors: As an Episcopal clergyman holding in high esteem the brilliant theological and sociological work of Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, as expressed in his many published books, I would nevertheless take issue with his assumption [May 8, 1953] that "the 'secular' universal public school is a unique American institution which cannot be successfully challenged, not only because hallowed national traditions have a special potency but because the religious pluralism of our nation would make any other solution impossible."

This nation is one hundred seventy-seven years of age, and religious pluralism has been present from its beginnings, but not wholly secularist education, which dates from about the turn of the century. For the first seventy-five years of our national history, virtually all our educational institutions, elementary on to university, were religiously integrated, most with some form of Protestantism, some with the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, the "hallowed national traditions" Dr. Niebuhr proclaims have no great age, and certainly do not date from the times of the founding fathers. To claim that our school system cannot be challenged is to imply a fixed national mentality, a political dogma, and a refutation of the possibility for change ever inherent to our American form of democracy. To indicate, as he does, a sort of invincible secularist-Protestant alliance for perpetuating a most unfortunate interpretation of the meaning of "Separation of Church and State" is to ignore a significant change of attitude of official Protestantism.

At the meeting of the National Council of Churches of Christ, held in Denver last December, the General Assembly of that representative body issued an historically important letter addressed "To the Christian People of America." In this letter, secularism was deplored as a pseudo-religion of the sort inculcated by Communist and Fascist governments. Referring to the school system the letter stated, "In some constitutional way provision should be made for the inculcation of the principles of religion." Here was a clear, unequivocal repudiation of secularism, addressed to *all* the Christians of this nation.

Many of us today have come to realize that we have been thinking of separation of Church and State in a way the fathers of our country clearly did not intend. They simply, and rightly, opposed the establishment of a state religion, and the favoring of any one denomination above another. The First Amendment does not state that government should not assist religion, and Thomas Jefferson makes this very clear in his writings.

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I refer Dr. Niebuhr and all other interested persons—and every man of good will should be interested—to Jefferson's specific statement to this effect on page 414 of the Memorial Edition of his writings.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the expression "Separation of Church and State" is losing a great deal of meaning in America, because Protestantism is losing the notion of Church with a capital "C," and is replacing it with the idea of churches existing as purely voluntary associations within the secular State; and because of the emergence of the concept of "One World," which may lead eventually to some kind of international organization with more characteristics of a universal State than those already shown in the United Nations. The dichotomy of Church and State tends to become meaningless in a religious structure which is multi-sectarian.

A solution of the dilemma supposed to confront a pluralist society in the matter of public education which I got on a recent visit to the provinces of Ontario and Quebec in Canada was reviewed recently in the April issue of *The Marianist*. It was condensed in the May number of *Catholic Digest*. It calls for a fourfold system—at all levels—into Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Secular schools and colleges, to assure democratic freedom of choice to all persons as to the kind of education their children shall receive. In areas where there were sufficient adherents to Eastern Orthodoxy, there would be a fifth school system.

Instead of a uniform secularist educational system paid for at the expense of all taxpayers, there could be a government matching of funds with Catholic, Protestant, Jewish *and* Secularist bodies, towards encouraging the spirit of voluntarism the government has attempted to foster by like arrangements with Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and non-denominational private hospitals. This might stimulate authentic free enterprise in the field of education.

I have known of too many non-Catholic parents who have faced the very real dilemma of either sending their children to a public school where no religion is taught, and where youngsters are very apt to draw the conclusion that religion is of no vital importance, or sending their children to a Roman Catholic school where a religion is taught to which, in whole or in part, the parents do not subscribe.

I realize fully the difficulties which would be involved in achieving a fourfold system of public education and the possible danger to educational unity which might arise from the Canadian plan, but I have thrown it out as a suggestion on which our educators might work toward the solution of the problem of religious education in a pluralistic society, a solution which I think would not be inconsistent with the pertinent provision of our federal constitution. I do not believe Protestantism would have to be broken down with respect to denominational points of view. Protestantism as a whole, within denominations as well as between denominations, is, and will probably continue to be, in a state of flux. Strictly denominational points of view are of waning interest to individuals within Protestantism and can scarcely be regarded as permanent. . . .

Dr. Niebuhr's comments on applying "the standards of Natural Law to the life of the community" are exceedingly interesting, particularly because they seem to imply, if they do not say directly, that Protestantism and Catholicism differ in their views of the nature of Natural Law. This is very far-reaching but it is another story which will have to be told by such a professional Thomist as Dr. James L. Hagerty of St. Mary's College in California rather than by me.

I think that Dr. Niebuhr has done a remarkable job in the rest of his article, in pointing out that both Protestants and Catholics can work together on a different basis in America than in the rest of the world, and that they ought to get down to brass tacks in discussing their differences and not simply gloss them over with honeyed words at inter-faith banquets. I would add that it is not unreasonable to expect Jews and Protestants and Catholics, all of whom believe in God and in a supernatural order, to unite in preventing secularism from becoming the accepted religion of the American public school, particularly if the public school is to carry the whole load of elementary and secondary education.

(*Very Rev.*) J. M. MALLOCH,
Dean, St. James Cathedral.

"AN AMERICAN IN ASIA"

Tokyo

TO the Editors: I thoroughly enjoyed and delighted in reading Chester Bowles' piece [April 24, 1953]. It gives a clear demonstration of what a thinking man can do in an area if he has the will to know more about the common people.

But I am a bit disturbed by the statement that "the caste system is officially unconstitutional." I think Mr. Bowles meant that Untouchability is unconstitutional. Caste is as integral a part of the Hindu religion as the Sacraments are of Catholicism. Gandhi once said that the cow and caste are the indispensables of Hinduism. Destroy the cow or destroy caste, and you destroy Hinduism. Gandhi's crusade to help the Untouchables was *not* to abolish the caste system, but to bring the Untouchables within the fold of the caste system: that is, the Hindu community.

RICHARD L-G. DEVERALL,
Representative in Asia,
The American Federation of Labor.

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Humanist on The Stump

PHILIP J. SCHARPER

THE publication by a major press of the campaign speeches of an unsuccessful presidential candidate within several months of his defeat is unique in the annals of American publishing. The issuing of *The Major Campaign Speeches of Adlai E. Stevenson* [Random House. $3.50] thus becomes a measure of the deep impression which the relatively unknown Governor of Illinois made on the consciousness of the national electorate last autumn. On reading these speeches now one feels the whole drama of the campaign come alive again, as we share with the candidate his hopes, his fears, his weariness, his deepened awareness of the meaning of America as he saw it from the stump.

But Adlai Stevenson, the candidate, has retired to private life after a resounding defeat. As a record of his campaign, these speeches are therefore of deep interest only to the historian, professional or amateur. But another figure than the partisan candidate slowly emerges from the text of these addresses. These speeches reveal more than a man "who put the word *candid* back into candidate;" they reveal also a political philosopher of intellectual range and penetration moved by compassion and charity.

It must constantly be remembered, of course, that in this volume we are dealing with a man who is thinking out a political philosophy, not in the scholarly quiet of the Academe or portico, but in the hurly-burly of an American Presidential campaign, where every utterance is conditioned by what the opposition said this morning, or may say tonight. Such towering figures of political theory as Plato, Aristotle or Suarez, had "'world enough and time;" Adlai Stevenson had to rely on the immediate verdict of the present, as he presented his case in Harlem or Houston. It is the more remarkable, therefore, that while tending to the *ad hoc* business of airing immediate issues, these addresses also present, with clarity and completeness, a philosophy of man and the state which is both eloquent and coherent.

IT is difficult to find a meaningful adjective to describe the political philosophy which Stevenson has delineated. The terms "liberal" and "conservative" have long since become semantic traps for the unwary. Perhaps, taking a cue from the illuminating article by Bishop John J. Wright recently published in The Commonweal [December 26, 1952], we might well call Stevenson a philosopher of "the common good," an eloquent spokesman for that "vital center" where moderates from both left and right can meet without sacrifice of either honor or conviction.

The most striking quality of his philosophy is its humanity. In all his remarks about economic, social or military problems, Stevenson seems aware that these are not abstractions to be airily discussed by savants, nor issues to be callously manipulated for partisan gain; to him, each problem is painfully concrete since it presses on the nerves or the heart-strings of individual men and women. The feeling one sometimes has when reading classical political philosophers—that one is overhearing detached Olympians discussing the affairs of mortals—is missing from these pages. One would look almost in vain among the professional philosophers—and economists or sociologists, for that matter—to find a passage comparable in its simple humanity to this characteristic statement of Stevenson:

> We have learned how important it is to approach the writing of laws, themselves cold things, from clear, warm pictures in our minds: of a family sitting around a supper table; of a rent bill coming due when there has been sickness in the family; of a child going off to school dressed differently from the others. We think we understand the feeling someone has when he is denied a job he knows he would have gotten if his skin had been of a different color. We think we know the feeling of an old man and woman who do not want to move in with their children.

It is in compassion such as this that one must locate the source of Stevenson's amazing political courage. If a man sincerely believes that behind every problem there stand other men who deserve the analysis of compassion, he need feel neither diffident nor belligerent in telling an audience in New Orleans that he has only one observation to make with regard to full citizenship for Negroes: "It is tragic that after two thousand years of Christianity we need discuss it at all." For the same reason he could say to the delegates who had drafted him: "Better we lose the election than mislead the people; and better we lose than misgovern the people."

There has been in modern political theory a tendency to love humanity in the abstract and to treat the individual rather cavalierly. The result has often been an attempt to draw up elaborate blueprints for the betterment of "the people"—and to be impatient to the point of cruelty with any individual who might object to the blueprints.

Adlai Stevenson is not a blueprint philosopher, busily fashioning a Procrustean bed for the body politic. For that reason he is an especially appealing figure in our modern political life, where "the man with a plan" has

Mr. Scharper is an Assistant Professor in the English Department at Fordham.

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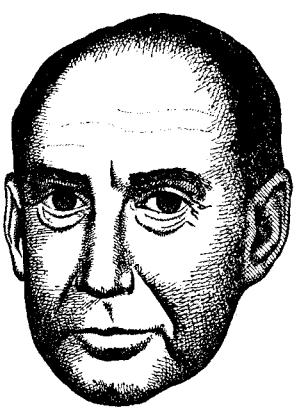
tended to displace the man of compassionate vision who is aware that "our problems are human problems. The ultimate answers do not lie in the legislator's inkpot or in the lawyer's brief."

BUT hardly less striking than the compass of his charity is the range and versatility of Adlai Stevenson's mind. This range and versatility give him humility before the complexities of Being. Merely to mention these qualities is to be reminded of how rarely they can be found in the political history of our past century.

For a certain simplicism seems to be one of the acquired characteristics of the American mind. It is almost symbolic that the bulldozer is an American invention, for we like to handle reality in much the same way, moving it easily and rapidly in great chunks to effect the philosophical landscape we desire. Native American philosophies such as behaviorism, pragmatism and instrumentalism have appealed to us because they seem to work, and they work so effectively precisely because they ignore half the facts in the human situation. In much the same way, our political thinking has exhibited a tendency to stress results and emphasize action at the expense of all but the grosser, rule-of-thumb forms of political thinking.



Our "block" thinking has thus produced philosophies without metaphysics, psychologies without a soul, and political thinking without the ultimate realism of hard, finely-drawn thought. What Tocqueville saw in the American attitude a century ago is still quite visible today: our preference for equality over liberty, our distrust of and impatience with hair-thin distinctions, and our faith, at once naive and comforting, that the majority is always right on every issue.

As a consequence, we have been particularly susceptible to whatever has the twin advantages of being both simple and spectacular. It would probably be unfair to state that this susceptibility represents a deep fear of the complex or "the counter, original, spare and strange." It seems to be rooted, rather, in a deep unawareness that these qualities of being exist and are important.

Whatever the causes, a respect for complexity has been too long absent from our political deliberations, wherein we have heard too often the great "Yes" and the great "No," but have heard too seldom the soft-spoken "Maybe." The pressures of outward events on our national psyche have seemed to result in the emergence of political leaders who offer a choice of extremes rather than attempt the difficult, unspectacular and often lengthy task of reconciling opposites and seeking truth, like virtue, somewhere in the middle. Politically, we have grown almost blind to any color other than black or white. Mr. Stevenson insists on seeing gray, and several shades of it.

His thinking consistently exhibits a flexibility and resilience which conscientiously rejects the application of either an easy monism or an anarchic pluralism to the issues of the day; his mind does not seek refuge in either the monolith or the labyrinth. And without attempting to revive partisan reactions, we may note that during the campaign Stevenson *did* say exactly the same thing on every issue in every part of the country; that he refused to support the candidacy of every Democrat on the grounds that all were "members of the team;" that he constantly reminded the American electorate that "there are no gains without pains," and that it was faced with great decisions, not easy ones.

His masterful analysis of the appeal of Communism to the Asiatics was based on the complex fact at which the majority of Americans blink; that, to much of the world, Communism wears not an iron mask, but the face of hope—a fact which lays upon us the heavy burden of supplying not an easy nostrum, but "a fuller application of Judaic-Christian ethics to the neighborhood of nations around us." This answer to the gravest moral and historical imperative of our time demands of us a truly heroic giving of what we are as well as of what we have.

It was not practical, politically, for Mr. Stevenson to lay this stern decision before the electorate; it was even less practical for him to add, "And we ought to do this not grudgingly, but with a clear recognition that it is far better to give than to receive." He thus gave a simple, but not simplistic, answer to an extremely complex problem. For the simplistic mind distrusts complexity, which it cannot handle. But the mind aware of complexity does not distrust simplicity; it only demands that the simplicity, as here, reside in an ultimate.

THE most sustained manifestation of Adlai Stevenson's ability to distill truth from the amalgam of extremes is probably to be found in his sense of history. Every campaign orator, of course, has tried to hitch his wagon to America's star, and has had much to say about the glories, real and imagined, of the American past. But most campaign oratory has been predicated on the *facts* of history, without a concomitant realization that ideas and ideals also enter into its very texture, indeed, constitute the only part of history which is of value.

Mr. Stevenson's history is neither a meaningless parchment nor a divine mandate whose iron lines we are committed to write over and over again. It is a record of human achievement and human failure which helps us to understand what we are and what we may become. Its values are real for us because they have proved their viability, and hence provide both a corrective for our

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schemes in the present and a pattern for our dreams of the future.

The American past, for Stevenson, represents a process by which, in our time, "America has been called to greatness." This greatness is, of course, a moral one—the leadership of the free world in "advancing the hopes through which man may eventually fulfill his destiny as a child of God." If America is successfully to answer that summons to "her vision, her humanity, her practicality," it can only be through cherishing the spiritual values on which the Republic rests:

> Let us remember that our bigness springs from our fields, forests, mines, and factories; but our greatness springs from the charters of our freedoms, and from countless men and women who believed, and believing, wrought.
>
> If some catastrophe destroyed the things that we have built, we could rebuild them. But if through some catastrophe we lost faith in the principles by which we came to birth and by which we live, we could never return to greatness.

It would be easy to write off a great deal of this as shopworn meliorism handed down from the Enlightenment. But Adlai Stevenson shows his deep awareness of man's painfully divided nature where the Enlightenment saw only good. It would be easy to call Stevenson's vision of America's role in history pathetically unrealistic. But to point out the necessity of striving for the ideal and the need of sacrifice to attain and keep it is a type of realism which history has confirmed and consecrated again and again, and nowhere more consistently and convincingly than in our own American past.

Adlai Stevenson appeals to this American past more often than has any political figure of this generation. It is significant of his total meaning as a statesman and for the final analysis of his vision that he sees in history a challenge, and a stay, for our courage and idealism, never a cushion for our complacency.

BOOKS

To Recover a Concept and a Tradition

THE CONSERVATIVE MIND. By Russell Kirk. Regnery. $6.50.

By FREDERICK D. WILHELMSEN

WHEN a civilization fails there is no more conspicuous mark of its decline than the vulgarization of language, the debasement of the written word. Conversely, the restoration of the word is a sign that men are rethinking their own heritage.

Almost two generations have passed since H. W. Fowler noted the corruption of the term "conservative"; its shoddy transformation into "moderate," "safe," "middle class," and all the Philistine connotations the latter calls to mind. Mr. Russell Kirk, in *The Conservative Mind,* has gone farther than anyone writing in English today in the work of restoring to the educated consciousness the full inheritance of the word "conservative."

Mr. Kirk's theme is the conservative mind, within the Anglo-American tradition, from Burke to Santayana. Working inductively from the thought of a host of varied and sometimes opposed thinkers, the author attempts to find a common conservative philosophy and attitude that runs through Burke, Adams, Coleridge, Randolph and Calhoun, Tocqueville, Bronson, Disraeli, Newman, and others.

He locates the beginnings of modern conservatism in Edmund Burke and the reaction against Jacobism and the spirit given birth by the French Revolution: the spirit holding, for first principles, the perfectibility of man and the necessary progress of human society; the contempt for tradition, coupled so paradoxically with both the religion of reason and the Romantic worship of emotion and impulse; the desirability of political levelling; the passion for economic and social collectivism.

Opposed to these liberal dogmas —the dogmas that largely made the modern world—conservatism, according to Mr. Kirk, summed itself up in six canons: (a) "belief that a divine intent rules society as well as conscience"; (b) affection for the "variety and mystery of traditional life"; (c) the conviction that "civilized society requires orders and classes"; (d) the persuasion that freedom must languish unless built on the foundation of property; (e) faith in the politics of prescription; (f) the recognition that change, if it would be fruitful, must be in close continuity with the historic social forces that have formed the corporate conscience.

This conservative canon is stamped with the genius of Edmund Burke, who saw human society as an order appointed by Providence, growing slowly with the ages into maturity, carrying into the present the accumulated wisdom of generations, expressing itself in a rich diversity of social and economic classes each bearing its own unique burden, and all working together toward the common good: a good fulfilled and achieved only on the condition that each man, village, town, profession, and class maintains itself distinct and apart.

The politics of prescription—Burke's trademark—grew out of a deep sense of veneration and reverence. Mr. Kirk indicates, with great penetration, how Burke's distrust for the abstract "natural rights" of the Revolution was born of his love for the complexity and mystery of human life, and for the sacredness of the person.

In Mr. Kirk's opinion, the essentially practical and humanist program of Burke was carried forward by conservatives who fought a long battle through a century and a half full of triumphs for the opposition, best represented by Utilitarianism, Liberalism, Benthamism, and Socialism. From Coleridge, through the "Tory Democracy" of Disraeli, and beyond to the rethinking of conservatism by Mallock, the forces of

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tradition have yielded point after point to the enemy, so that today English Toryism is no longer the exclusive party of the "country" as opposed to the "town."

Paradoxically enough, the limitations of the author's analysis of the English scene reveal themselves to the reader only after he has followed his discussion of American conservatism. Beginning well with a consideration of John Quincy Adams' insistence on Liberty under the Law, Mr. Kirk goes on admirably to dissect the myth of Hamiltonian "conservatism." It was the commercial and centralizing policy of Hamilton that eventually blurred the essential conservatism of the American Constitution—an instrument forged by men convinced that freedom lay in the decentralization of political and economic power.

Up to this point, Mr. Kirk's handling of American conservatism is not only admirable; it is masterful. But his failure to treat the whole tradition of American Agrarian Democracy, from Jefferson to the Populists, leaves his thesis incomplete and possibly in jeopardy.

If conservatism today is marked everywhere, as he holds it to be, by its opposition to the mechanized universe of the great modern city, if conservatism resolutely sets itself against the "social engineers," the "democratic planners," the "salvation through leisure time" sociologists—if conservatism, in short, opposes the whole depersonalized civilization in which we live, then a study of the conservative mind ought to consider one of the main forces that opposed this new world through a whole century of combat.

The Jeffersonian tradition was such a force. If that tradition had won its long battle against the commercial and financial interests that transformed the United States, within three generations, from a proprietary and agrarian country into a capitalist state, American conservatism today would be conserving, rather than reacting against, a world in existence.

Mr. Kirk has marshalled an impressive list of American and British conservative thinkers: men who are reacting against the collectivist universe on battlegrounds ranging from party politics to religion. The question I would ask him and all conservatives is this: what is the key to the spirit conservatism is fighting? Unless that spirit be understood in its very essence, the fight is in vain.

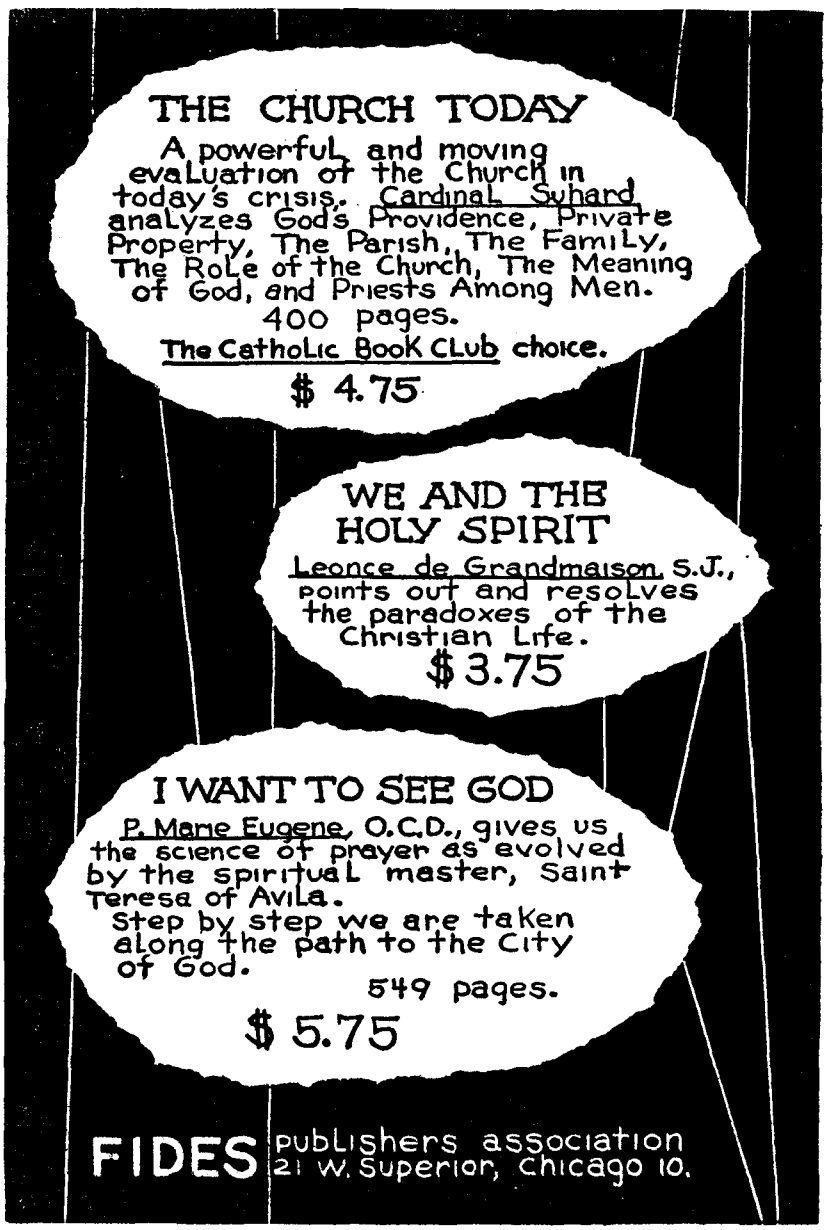
Until Mr. Kirk leads his investigation into this ground I am afraid his restoration of the conservative heritage will remain incomplete. I am therefore happy to note that he has not concluded his work. His recent discussion of "The Plight of American Minds and Hearts" (*The Sewanee Review*, Spring, 1953) is, in my opinion, perhaps the most penetrating analysis of the contemporary intellectual in print today.

Quiet Conflict

MR. NICHOLAS. By Thomas Hinde. Farrar, Straus and Young. $3.

By CAROL H. WEISS

AS soon as Peter Nicholas came home from Oxford for summer vacation, he was entangled in the same old family tensions and bickering. His mother worked valiantly to maintain some semblance of a happy home, but her pathetic cheerfulness never made much impression. Mr. Nicholas dominated the household, arguing, expounding, prodding his three sons to behave according to his standards, determined to mold them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into the compliant and adoring images his vanity craved.

Thomas Hinde, at twenty-five, has done a masterly dissection of the life of an upper middle class English family. It is a quiet, even muted, story gradually built up out of dozens of humdrum little episodes—a tennis match, the offer of a puppy, a disagreement over chopping down trees. The antagonisms never erupt into open hostility. In the prosperous London suburb—as unpleasant a community of retired gentry as recent fiction boasts—crises are cautiously avoided. But out of the daily encounters Mr. Hinde has fashioned a deadly picture of the submerged conflict that estranges every member of the family.

If the story is deliberately understated, and even the title avoids any hint of color, it is because this is Peter's view of the summer. Peter, the oldest of the three sons, is an artistic, introspective twenty-year-old with an aversion for dramatics. His antennae are sensitive to every vibration in the household, but he tries to dissociate himself from the emotions around him. Repelled by his father's arrogance and his mother's undiscriminating complaisance:

> he tried to hide his feelings whatever they were, his fears and desires, because they would be ridiculed or remembered, even his acts of kindness because they showed a weakness. That was growing up; learning to curl up smaller, to leave exposed only what could not be hurt and didn't matter.

Nevertheless, for all his efforts at detachment, Peter found his father as hard to ignore as the Colossus of Rhodes. When Mr. Nicholas was present, the conversation was a monologue, full of his doings and his successes, a repetition of the same ideas in the same sequence at the same cues. He had infuriating little prejudices, and if his sons disagreed with them, it was because they hadn't lived as long as he had. He'd have a good talk with them to make them understand.

Full of restless energy and driven by a craving for admiration, Mr. Nicholas found his family too narrow a field for his efforts. He organized political clubs and cricket matches, he spent evenings drinking at the tavern with the neighborhood eccentrics, weekended in London with a neighbor's wife. But through all the activity and the bombast, there were hints of the emptiness of his life. Four years earlier he had had a nervous breakdown, and after a row with the treasurer of his club, the symptoms began to reappear. Peter sensed dimly that part of his loneliness stemmed from disappointment with his family. Perhaps he, too, was a victim of the conflict and was hurt as deeply as any of them by the lack of genuine affection.

Mr. Nicholas was received enthusiastically in Britain. Eudora Welty called Mr. Hinde's prose a joy, "honest, lyrical, neat and beautiful, and aimed with deadly accuracy at human truths." Henry Green, going her one better, said, "'Thomas Hinde with his first novel, *Mr. Nicholas,* has made himself into the white hope of these islands."

There is little question about Mr. Hinde's talent. In the difficult area of

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a family's ambivalent relationships, he displays mature perception and a superb command of language. Perhaps his novel has a more particular appeal for the English. Its self-revelations must strike a more personal chord, just as I imagine a book like J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* hits closer to home for Americans. Certainly *Mr. Nicholas* is an impressive first novel, but Mr. Green's talk about white hopes sounds like an undue rush to get there the fustest with the mostest. So restrained is the book and so identified with Peter Nicholas' inhibitions that I, for one, would like to see what Mr. Hinde can do when he opens up the throttle.

All the Way

THE SINGER NOT THE SONG. By Audrey Erskine Lindop. Appleton-Century-Crofts. $3.75.

By JEAN HOLZHAUER

THIS novel is, according to its publishers, "a story of great warmth and deep feeling . . . [of] two adversaries—one standing for all that is good, the other representing all that is evil—perfectly matched, both equally exciting and appealing."

The representative of good is, not surprisingly, a handsome, Gregory Peck-type priest, Father Keough, who can preach, fight, stave off civil insurrection and a romance with a parishioner, and coolly read the *Summa Theologica* while waiting for a bandit to put a bullet through his head. "Exciting"? "Appealing"? What else?

The evil boy is a handsome, untutored Mexican desperado, who can terrorize a town or win a senorita with equal dexterity and read—to judge by his conversation—Paul Blanshard in his off hours. Remarks we doubt ever got remarked by an untutored Mexican desperado: "I've hated your Church because of its tyranny! It grinds the souls of millions under the jackboot of hypocrisy with its threats of spiritual extinction!"

Also among those present: Locha, the confused young beauty who falls in love with Father Keough; Marian, her jazz-age American mother with a heart of gold; Sam, an alcoholic with a heart of gold who calls Father Keough "Mac"; Miss Finch, an English governess with a heart of gold who calls Father "Mr. Keough"; Father Lopez, a neighboring pastor who bites his knuckles when distressed; assorted Mexicans who betray distress more explosively (shouts, screams, curses, machete forays, gunfire).

Nearly everyone, understandably, is distressed throughout the book, which chronicles Father Keough's battle with Malo, the desperado, for the earthly and spiritual welfare of the town. Through it all, Father Keough remains staunch, pure and patient. Malo is, on the other hand, frequently compared to the cats which follow him about, so you can see how bad *he* is.

The book jacket indicates that the author, Audrey Erskine Lindop, is an appealing, possibly exciting lady with a background of film script writing. Her background shows. To do her full justice, her plot and dialogue,

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except for Malo's more turgid utterances, move along at a brisk clip, and her characterizations are not all corn. She is even, sometimes, intentionally funny.

The Singer Not the Song will probably make a popular movie of about the caliber of *The Keys of the Kingdom*. Get out the cassocks, M-G-M; here comes Father Michael Keough!

Life of the Spirit

CHRIST THE IDEAL OF THE PRIEST. By the Right Rev. D. Columba Marmion. Translated from the French by Dom Matthew Dillon. Herder. $4.50.

BY ALBAN BAER

IN a letter addressed to the translator and compiler of this work, Cardinal Suhard, the late Archbishop of Paris, wrote: "The spiritual teaching of Dom Marmion furnishes a Catholic synthesis at once profoundly human and supernatural which is perfectly adapted to the needs of our times and to the present orientation of Catholic piety." We may find in these words of the Cardinal an epitome of what readers have always expected to find, and apparently have found, in the Abbot's published spiritual conferences. For his earlier books—*Christ the Life of the Soul, Christ in His Mysteries, Christ the Ideal of the Monk*—have had a steady sale since their first appearances upwards of twenty years ago; and this despite their excessive cost and comparative unreadability.

The present book gives us the mixture as before. It is a solid, sober, serious, but perhaps not very imaginative or original, treatise on the priest as *alter Christus*. We get first a discourse on the priesthood of Christ and an exposition of the priest as participating in and exercising that priesthood. In Part II the "priestly virtues"—faith, compunction, humility, religion, charity—are each considered in detail. Next are brought forward the means which unite the priest to Christ: the Mass and Holy Communion, the Divine Office; then a plea for the sanctification of ordinary actions and for a filial devotion to the Mother of God. At the end of the book a number of extracts from Abbot Marmion's journals and letters are provided, arranged under headings to correspond with the chapter titles of the book and presumably intended to illustrate and expand the topics dealt with in these chapters. All is as expected: there is nothing to alarm or surprise the reader, little to transport him.

What is there, one asks on finishing this book, to account for such a remarkable reputation? We must remember that not Cardinal Suhard only, but the great Cardinal Mercier himself, looked to Abbot Marmion for spiritual direction. Not Benedictines only (one might then attribute it to monastic loyalty!) but Jesuits also, and learned prelates, have drunk deep and gratefully of this author's work. It is not magnificence of construction. It is certainly not brilliance of style (to judge, at any rate, from the translations). It is not interest of content. Nowhere does the Abbot permit himself the illuminating an-

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ecdote, the homely example. If anything, it can only be the unspectacular but unerring use of Scripture, especially of the Pauline epistles. These are the Abbot's constant source of quotation; and the verses fall into their places as inevitably, as inexorably, as though they had been distributed by the arm of some infallible conveyor.

We must remember also that at the time Dom Marmion was giving his conferences—and to a regrettable extent this remains true even today—there was little or no treatment of the spiritual life that took into account at all comprehensively what should have been its firmest foundation: the truths of dogmatic theology. These truths the Abbot has constantly before him as he speaks. No wonder, therefore, that his utterances, then and ever since, were received eagerly by a laity previously unacquainted with the rich suggestiveness of a theological presentation, however bald, of the life of the spirit.

In assessing the Abbot's great reputation among his contemporaries we must not forget, either, that they had the living words of the master on which to base their judgment. None of the Abbot's books was written out by himself. All are compilations based on notes taken while he spoke. It is no matter for surprise if in the course of this process much has been lost. Dom Matthew Dillon, a monk of Glenstal Priory in Ireland and hence a compatriot as well as a coreligionist of the Abbot, in a valuable preface explains this and other circumstances which account for the book's tardy appearance. He has done his work well enough, but in one place (pp. 190-191) he is actually misleading when he has the Abbot allude to the encyclical *Mediator Dei,* promulgated twenty-four years after Dom Marmion's death by a pontiff of whom he was never a subject. It is useful to know of any parallelism of the Abbot's doctrine with that of the encyclical, but this information finds its proper place in a footnote, not in the text.

Those who love their Marmion will not be deceived by the title of this, the last book we are to have bearing his name, into believing that it can be of value only to priests. All that is said in it can apply, *mutatis mutandis,* fully as well to the laity and to religious. He says, for example: "The character conferred in baptism gives to every Christian, as well as the capacity to receive the other sacraments, a real though inchoate power to participate in the priesthood of Christ." Familiar as this truth may be, it cannot be too often repeated; and it underlines the significance of all that Dom Marmion has to say, not only to the priest, but to every Catholic who desires to renew his spiritual life from the solid source of Christian doctrine.

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Frederick D. Wilhelmsen is a member of the Philosophy department at the University of Santa Clara.

Carol H. Weiss is a frequent reviewer for The Commonweal.

Jean Holzhauer writes for several Catholic publications.

Dom Alban Baer, O.S.B., is a monk of Portsmouth Priory.

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